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REMARKS

UPON

MR. SUMNER'S ORATION.

July 1845

REMARKS

UPON

AN ORATION DELIVERED BY

CHARLES SUMNER

BEFORE THE

7578.146

AUTHORITIES OF THE CITY OF BOSTON,

JULY 4th, 1845.

BY A CITIZEN OF BOSTON.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

To the citizens of Boston, particularly the *military part of them,* no apology can be necessary for the publication of the following remarks. The author regrets that the task of replying to the Oration to which they refer, had not fallen to the lot of some one more competent to its performance than himself. Should the public, however, not approve of what he has done, he hopes that they will, at least, do justice to the motive that induced him to "volunteer to look like a soldier" in the defence of a common cause.

Boston, Oct. 20, 1845.

REMARKS.

"And the bramble said unto the trees, come and put your trust in my shadow."

For a Fourth of July Oration this is certainly an unusual production. To those who listened to it upon a *festival* day it must have been a source of "most dismal joviality, and grim enjoyment." We have rarely met with an address which seems so little adapted to the occasion. How any assembly on a day of *rejoicing*, could have sat quietly and heard it through, is more than we can explain. That they did so clearly proves, that if the heroes of the Revolution have transmitted no other of their virtues to their descendants, they certainly have that of their patience and long-suffering.

The writer is in politics what the Millenist is in religion; and seems to be watching daily for a political millennium. He is a theorist; and there is perhaps, no man more useless in society than the theorist. In most cases his lights are no better than those of the wrecker kindled along the shore; they serve only to lure upon the rocks those who, in their ignorance, mistake the blazing faggot for the beacon-light. He adds nothing to the general stock of wealth either material or intellectual. Unlike the silkworm, he spins his web out of his brains instead of his bowels, and the fabric, instead of covering the nakedness of others, serves only to expose his own. From the days of the empiric who endeavored to "distill moon-beams from cucumbers," to the present time, the world has gained nothing by the labors of the theorist. He has wasted his nights in vigils to construct systems which, like the darkness in which they were constructed, the light of the next day has dissipated. The few grains of sense which he mingles with his absurdities, are like the few grains of gold used by the alchemist

in the transmutation of his metals, which disappear in the base mixture with which they are compounded. If he who makes two blades of grass grow where but one has grown before is it to be considered a public benefactor, what rank of usefulness, however humble, is not more elevated than that of the theorist?

The tendency of the present age, it is deeply to be regretted, is far too chimerical. Unsubstantial theories are rising up around us in every direction which, like the *mirage* of the desert, promise green fields and cooling streams to the eye, but leave the dusty and heated way of life as cheerless and comfortless as before. The cool and dispassionate man who sees things in their proper size and shape, whose eye is not a prism that gilds every object, however worthless, with hues of purple and gold, is continually led to ask himself the question, how it is that so many absurd speculations are abroad; that folly with its cap and bells so often leads the way, whilst good sense, like the ammunition of an army, is ever to be found in the rear.

We have said that the writer of this Oration is a theorist. We do not wish to be understood to deny that many of his positions are true, and many of his observations just; but his conclusions are visionary, and his argument altogether unsound. The writer belongs to a certain class of political reformers who have recently sprung up among us, whose doctrines are those of *non-resistance.* Who hold to the principle of moral influence and persuasion. Who contend that war is entirely unnecessary and unjustifiable; and that we are to subdue our enemies by kindness, and not by violence. The purpose of this Oration is to enforce this doctrine; and the writer has not been over modest in the manner, in which he has endeavored to acquit himself of the task. It is no slight reproach upon him that he seized upon an occasion for the public expression of his opinions, which was of all others the most unfit. Our national birth-day was, surely, the last that should have been selected to proclaim the doctrines of *non-resistance.* When those who achieved our Independence predicted, that "that day would never pass without public rejoicings, the ringing of bells, and *the firing of cannon,*" they little thought that it would ever be desecrated, by one of their descendants, by the expression of sentiments subversive of that independ-

ence, and derogatory to the memory of those by whom it was accomplished.

The writer was selected, by the Municipal Authorities of the City, to address his fellow-citizens upon a day set apart for the celebration of the Independence of his country; an independence secured by the wisdom, bravery and military prowess of those statesmen and heroes, whose names are ever, on that day, "gratefully and freshly remembered." In accepting this appointment, did he not impliedly engage that he would not reproach their memories, by proclaiming doctrines at variance with those which animated them, and by condemning measures, which they had sanctioned by their example, and consecrated by their death?

We are not disposed to quarrel with a man for the peculiarities of his faith so long as he keeps them to himself, or bestows them upon those only who like them. But when he imposes them upon an assembly to whom he knows they must be offensive, the mantle of charity which might be broad enough to cover the defects of his creed, becomes insufficient to cover those of his manners. We are aware that instances are not wanting in which public speakers, selected for some particular occasion, have availed themselves of the opportunity to express opinions which they knew to be at variance with the sentiments, and a perversion of the intentions, of those to whom they were indebted for their short-lived notoriety and momentary treachery. But such conduct has ever been held a gross violation of all conventional rule. Even political zeal, eminently regardless of the charities of life, would shrink from such indelicacy. Are not even the public meetings of the respective political parties considered sacred ground, so far as regards intrusion from one of an opposite creed? What should we think of a clergyman who, being invited to address a religious assembly, should indulge himself in the out-pourings of infidelity? Does not the orator, in such a case, presume upon a greater sense of propriety in his hearers, than he manifests himself? We are aware that there is a class of speculatists among us who have more zeal than discretion; who consider their own doctrines as more important than all others; who seem to feel themselves justified in resorting to any means of propagandism; who, while preaching *non-resistance*, are among

the most mulish and obstinate of all sectarians; who are crying *peace*, when their whole life is but one crusade against those who are more peaceable than themselves; and who seem to make no other distinction than their prototype, the Quaker, who when chidden for fighting, justified himself by saying that he was not *fighting*, but only *chastising* his adversary. With such persons, there is no time like the present for making proselytes; and no place like that in which they may happen to be.

It must not be thought that we speak from resentment, because we happened to be among the number of those who were victimized on the occasion, upon which this Oration was delivered. We were more amused than provoked at the incongruity of the affair. We had a full indemnity for our disappointment, in the gratification we derived from studying the physiognomy of those Conscript Fathers, by whose wisdom the orator had been selected. Their vacant stare of astonishment we have never seen equalled, excepting at the entertainment of some juggler, when some amazed rustic sees the egg he has put into a hat come out a pancake, or his handkerchief converted into an old woman's night-cap.

As a literary production, we must say that we are disappointed in this Oration. From its great elaborateness, and evident marks of painful gestation, we should have expected something of a more finished and workman-like character. Its style is harsh and unpolished; its sentences badly constructed, and often involved and obscure. It is not without occasional brilliant passages, but they are generally, we think, in bad taste. They might pass for eloquence in a large assembly, but they will not bear severe criticism. The public are not fastidious. With them, the *sound* of the drum is an apology for its emptiness; and, to the eye of the multitude, the figures in a magic lantern possess more beauty than those in the Gallery at Florence.

But what strikes us among the most obvious features of this work, is its entire want of originality. There is nothing new in its sentiments, its arguments, or its illustrations. It is an echo only, of what is repeated at every anniversary of the American Peace Society. It cannot be said to have been even *composed* by the author; it has been *compiled*

from the writings of others. It is not like a statue chiseled from a block of marble; but like a birds-nest built out of materials gathered from all quarters, and without any great scrupulousness or delicacy as to their quality or value. It is not like a classic temple reared from stone fresh from the living quarry; it is like a mosque, or pagoda erected from the ruins or plundered remains of Grecian and Roman temples, theatres and palaces, combining in inextricable confusion, architecture of all dates and orders. Could each violated pile reclaim its own, what would be left of this cloud-capt edifice? Not even its foundations, for it stands upon the loose earth.

But we care little for this work as a literary production, it is with its sentiments only, that we feel ourselves called upon to contend.

The first position of the writer is, that war calls forth the brutal or animal qualities of man's nature only.

To illustrate this point he has loaded his pages with pedantic quotations from Homer, Hesiod, Cicero, Virgil and Shakspeare. This is certainly fortifying an indefensible position at a great expense of labor and learning; and if the fortifications upon our seaboard, of which the writer complains so grievously, are to be sustained by an equal waste of means, we should be inclined to agree with him that they ought to be dismantled, and their "guns cast into the sea." But could the writer, when searching his authorities, find no instances in which war had called forth other qualities than those of brute force? Has the field of battle never been the scene of noble and generous emotions? If the writer had aimed less at learned quotation, if instead of resorting to books he had visited the hospitals of Chelsea and Greenwich, he might have learned from their inmates, the crippled remains of a hundred wars, that the noblest virtues are to be found side by side with this brutal ferocity which appears alone to inflame his imagination. Has he never heard of that generous enthusiasm, which has induced the humblest soldier to sacrifice his life in the defence of his friend, or the rescue of his superior officer?

No situation in life can furnish instances of more generous, noble, humane and disinterested conduct than the army. Though the trade of the soldier is blood, it is not blood shed with a felon's spirit. However the love of glory

may have nerved his arm to violence, it has not deadened his heart to kind and gentle impulses. The man who is not the soldier's enemy, is his friend; and he is no longer his enemy than while in arms against him. How rare are the instances in which life is unnecessarily taken on the field of battle! How few are generally killed or wounded in an engagement, compared with the number involved in the contest! "Reason is not dethroned," as the writer asserts, even amidst the carnage of war. Man still preserves his distinction from the brute, notwithstanding he is placed in a situation in which his physical powers are more particularly brought into action. There is no state which develops all the powers of man, intellectual and physical, so completely as that of war. The writer is grossly wrong in supposing a contest between two armies, to be like that between two packs of wolves. However the moralist may mourn over the waste of human life, he cannot but be consoled with the reflection that the divine spirit of man is not extinguished, if it is sometimes dimmed in the conflict.

We are certainly not anxious to recall the days of chivalry. But he must have a soul as dull as the "fat weed that floats on Lethe's stream" who can be insensible to its refined spirit, its generous sentiment and its uncompromising sense of honor. Man is not the less estimable because he is brave, refined and honorable. The world would gain little by depressing the standard of manly independence and unreserved frankness of character. The tendency of a military spirit is certainly to preserve an elevation of mind. There is no nation whose history does not show it to have possessed more true greatness of soul during its military age, than that of its commercial prosperity. Military nations are not luxurious. Rome was less corrupt in the time of her wars, than in the years of peace which succeeded them.

War has its miseries and crimes, and they are dreadful. But it is free, in a degree at least, from that "canker of a calm world and long peace"— *selfishness* — that poisonous weed, which dwarfs, if it does not destroy, every salutary plant. The condition of the soldier teaches him to "love his neighbor," if it is his duty to kill his enemy. This is a lesson which many of the advocates of peace have yet to learn. The very dependence of the soldier upon his companion in arms, calls forth his sympathy and benevolence.

Can any one read the history of My Uncle Toby and Corporal Trim, or the pathetic story of Le Fevre, and not feel the force, as well as beauty with which this principle is illustrated? Could the writer of this Oration hear some "old man-of-wars-man" spin his long yarn upon his watch at midnight, he would learn that even war has more nobleness, generosity and kindness in its character, than he has ever yet "dreamt of in his philosophy."

It would be no difficult task to point out the sordid and degrading, the mean and selfish accompaniments of peace, as a partial offset to the miseries and crimes of war. Experience has shown that

> "Honor sinks where commerce long prevails."

That state of society which teaches man to study his own individual good, cannot lead to a high state of moral excellence. It may banish some of the ruder vices, but it kills the soul of man as effectually as war destroys his body. There is no pestilence like that which "walketh in darkness." It is not the eruption that covers the surface, but the poison that lurks in the veins that destroys. He who in war, demands the life of another in equal combat, is a generous foe, compared with him who takes the means whereby another lives, through the chicanery of the law, or the artifices of trade.

> "Tom struts a *soldier*, open, bold and brave;
> Will sneaks a *scriv'ner*, an exceeding knave."

Menalaus may have deserved the name of "a beast," and Ajax that of "a tawny lion," but the name of "*the serpent*," has properly been reserved for the Archfiend, himself.

Should we attempt to give a catalogue of the great and good men whose profession has been that of arms, we should extend these remarks even beyond the wearisome number of pages of the writer's Oration. We shall dismiss the subject, therefore, with a single observation, the truth of which every reader of history will admit, that among the benefactors of mankind none have been more conspicuous than those distinguished for military greatness. Should we seek for examples, however, it would not be among the

poetical butchers of Homer, or the dark and bloody sketches of a barbarous age, but in the history of real life, and in a state of society where the military and civil character could be fairly contrasted.

"The immediate effect of war," says the writer, "is to sever all relations of friendship and commerce between the two nations, and every individual thereof, impressing upon each citizen or subject the character of enemy."

The miseries of war are familiar to all. But although they are a trite subject, they will still bear to be dwelt upon. The horrors of the battle-field are among the earliest impressions of our infancy, and they will probably be the last to desert us in our old age. It can require, therefore, no learned dissertation to convince the nineteenth century that peace, with her dove-like eye, is preferable to the "stern and wrinkled front of war."

But shocking as are the details of war, still they do not sustain the truth of the doctrine of *non-resistance.* They offer the strongest reasons for not going to war, but they do not prove that war is unnecessary. It might as well be contended that the pains of amputation prove the surgeon's knife to be useless. The remedy in both cases is dreadful, but it is resorted to as the least of two evils. That resistance is sometimes necessary, no man in his senses can doubt; and if so, the necessity of war is established; as war is but the extreme point of resistance. This is so clear that one struggles in vain to make it clearer by any species of illustration, or argument. The principle runs through all nature; the very foundations of society rest upon it. What is society? Is it not an association for mutual defence? Why did man leave the savage state, in which there was no right but the right of the strongest, excepting for mutual defence and protection; and that the weak might, thereby, be put upon an equality with the strong? The Indian warrior meets his weaker foe in the forest; he slays him, and bears his scalp to his wigwam, and hangs it up as a trophy. It was to obviate such evils as these, that men associated themselves together; and it seems almost idle to remark that such association would be useless, if its very end and object is to be abandoned upon the principle of *non-resistance.*

It is true that, in war, the brutal propensities of man are

active; but it is surely a new argument to urge, that the way to subdue a propensity is to submit to it. Does not the very ground assumed by the writer in his Oration — that man is in his nature warlike — prove the necessity of self-defence, and the utter folly of passive obedience in any people who do not mean to be slaves? What are his positions? That man is constitutionally aggressive; — that the world is filled with armed men; — that the love of military glory has whitened every field on the fair surface of the earth with the bones, and moistened it with the blood of millions; — that fleets and armies have sought, and are still seeking the most remote parts of the world for the purpose of conquest or plunder; — that, from the coast of Labrador to the coral isles of the Pacific, from the mountains of Iceland to the sands of Africa, prevails one military spirit. And what is the conclusion he draws from these premises? Why, that we should dismantle our fortifications, break up our ships of war, disband our army, and devote the surplus capital of the country to the encouragement of literature, and the arts of peace. In the midst of an armed world we are to stand unarmed and defenceless, and our weakness is to be our *protection!* We know that the hero of La Mancha went mad from reading books upon chivalry, and we greatly fear that the writer of this Oration has incurred the same misfortune from too diligent a perusal of Horace and Virgil,

> "Or he has eaten of the insane root
> That takes the reason prisoner."

Perhaps it is folly to call for argument where it is obvious that none can be produced; but we had, at least, a right to expect that some learned writer upon international law would be adduced in support of this fanciful position, even if it was necessary to pervert his meaning. But the writer, as we might have expected from the other parts of his Oration, loves poetry better than law. He discards such unimaginative writers as Grotius and Puffendorf, Vattel, and Martens and resorts to his classics for his legal authorities.

This strange position, *that the weakness of a nation constitutes its strength,* is based by the writer on two grounds.

1. "That the possession of power is always in itself dangerous, that it tempts the purest and highest natures to self-indulgence, and that it can rarely be enjoyed without abuse."

2. That man is governed by sympathy; that "we are all knit together so that the feelings in our own bosom awaken corresponding feelings in the bosoms of others."

As to his first ground, it is sufficient to say that the same argument may be urged with equal force against the possession of learning, talent, wealth and every other quality or property in which one man can be superior to another; they may all be abused. But are none of these to be cultivated and cherished lest they should be misapplied? It is worse than foolish to establish schools and colleges to develop the human powers, if the possibility of their being abused is an argument against the possession of them. A dull and tame mediocrity would inevitably be the result of such a state as he recommends; and even the system of moral reform, at which he aims, must fail, as an attempt at superiority in excellence itself would not unfrequently be attended by that too common accompaniment — *self-righteousness*. Emulation must become extinct; we must be "content to dwell in decencies forever;" we must not only bid

> "Farewell the plumed troop, and the big wars
> That make ambition virtue,"

but all literary as well as military distinctions must be abolished; not only the "medal of merit," in our Public Schools, which has hitherto answered no other purpose than to make little boys fight, must be torn from the necks of our infant statesmen, but, even the time-honored degrees of Alma Mater herself, so often prostituted to sycophancy and pretension, and with which our older statesmen are "pleased as with a rattle," must also pass away. We doubt, however, whether the writer himself, from the ambitious style of his Oration, notwithstanding the *humility* of his sentiments would be willing to forego the square cap and gown of a professorship, if they were tendered to him, though he might the plume and helmet. He might not be disposed to "volunteer to look like a soldier," but to be a

"learned gownsman," or "a bishop," might not strike his "temperate pulsation" as quite so ridiculous.

His second ground he considers as supported by the "old Horatian adage," "*if you wish me to weep you must yourself first weep.*" This "adage," to which he refers, is a rule laid down by Horace in his Art of Poetry; and is certainly a very good one for the government of tragic writers or actors; but the laws of dramatic composition, and those of national policy, we have always supposed to be by no means identical. We must be allowed to doubt whether we could *cry* an invading army away from our shores, even though we should be "like Niobe, all tears;" and to *laugh* them away, we think, might exceed even the risible powers of David Crockett himself, though he "could grin a knot out of an oak."

The writer considers his doctrine of *sympathy* still farther illustrated by the "interesting story of Orpheus;" "whose music drew in listening rapture the lions and panthers of the forest," &c.

We may well express our astonishment at the puerile introduction of such scraps of poetry, and "odd pieces of learning" as these into the discussion of a grave question of national policy. It might answer for a college theme, but is surely out of place in the discussion of questions of a solemn and weighty character. There are no two worse travelling companions than *Arcadian simplicity* and *worldly wisdom.*

From such flimsy materials as these the writer constructs his theory of *non-resistance;* and from his doctrine of *sympathy* deduced from them, invites us to adopt with him the following paradoxical conclusions; — that he who makes no resistance will not be attacked; — that it is the strong and not the weak who are the subjects of oppression; — that temptation and opportunity are no inducements to commit a crime, and that the robber who knows you are unarmed and defenceless will be certain not to rob you. He does not tell us how it happens that robberies are generally committed in the night-time, and in by-places, when, upon his principle, they ought to be committed in broad daylight, and in the public squares of the city; but this little apparent contradiction to his system can probably be reconciled by him upon the supposition that

the robber takes it for granted that those who travel alone, and in the dark, always carry pistols!

Shade of Milton! how must thy sainted spirit grieve at the unpardonable sin committed by thee in that *immoral* poem of thine, — Paradise Lost — in which thou hast represented the Almighty as driving the rebellious angels from Heaven by force! Didst thou not know that they might have been subdued by *sympathy*, and peace have been restored to Heaven? Wast thou not aware that "peace produces peace," and that "war arouses war!" Hadst thou never read Horace, and that "interesting story of Orpheus?" Dost thou not tremble lest thy poem, which has so long corrupted the public by "stimulating war," should be burned by the American Peace Society?

We are astonished that the writer of this Oration when he cited the "story of Orpheus" did not also quote that of Daniel in the lion's den; he had undoubtedly come across it in his very general search for appropriate authorities; but as Daniel's life, in that instance, was preserved by a miracle, he probably thought it was not a case in point; as it was not one in which Daniel owed his safety to that powerful principle of sympathy for which the writer contends so earnestly. It, however, strikes us upon farther reflection, that if the writer's doctrine is sound, a miracle was quite unnecessary in Daniel's case, as he might have been saved upon the true "Horatian" principle without one; he had only to "weep first," which we have no doubt he would very readily have done, and the lions would have followed his example with all the gentleness imaginable. We sincerely hope, however, that the writer will never be placed in Daniel's situation, and obliged to rely upon his own principle for his protection. We have a high opinion of Horace as a poet and good judge of wine; and we honor Orpheus greatly as a good husband, inasmuch as he *redeemed* his wife from that place where so many bad ones would be glad to *send* their own; but we cannot admit their authority as to the point to which they are cited.

Another position of the writer is, "that war is utterly ineffectual to secure or advance the object at which it aims." "The misery which it excites," he says, "contributes to no end, helps no right, and therefore in no respect determines justice between the contending nations."

This principle is laid down in the same confident and unqualified manner as those upon which we have before commented. The logic of this writer is of that uncompromising character which admits of no limitation, or exception to its propositions; and no degrees of faith in those who may adopt them. Had he stated the principle above quoted, as *generally* true, we should have readily assented to it; but, as a *universal* truth, we do not hesitate to deny it.

It is one of the decrees of Heaven that good shall come out of evil; and war, like other evils, has produced its full proportion of good. Unmixed good we cannot look for in a world composed of good and evil so entwined, that the longer we live the more difficult we find it to predict the result of any particular action. War has cost its millions of lives and its millions of treasure. But have all these been wasted? He must be poorly versed in history who could venture such an assertion. "God has made even the wrath of man to praise him." It would not be difficult to prove by learned authorities, had we the leisure to exhaust a library as the writer has done, that not a war has taken place from which some great good has not flowed, as well as great evil. Should we assert that even the Christian religion has been advanced by it more than by any other cause, though we might be thought guilty of profanity, we should not be unsupported by the truth. Where would Christianity have been at this day if Constantine and his army had not adopted it, and brought the strong arm of military power to its aid? Have not the martial legions of England done more to advance Christianity in Asia and Africa, than all its missionary societies? If the Christian temple ever rises upon the ruins of Braminical and Mohammedan superstition, will not its foundations have been laid by the sword and the bayonet? How many ages must have elapsed before the light of reason had penetrated those regions of heathen darkness, had they not been first illuminated by the flash of the cannon? Ask the toiling missionary which has done the most to sustain him in his religious career, the staff of the pilgrim, or the spear of the warrior? Not a fleet has penetrated an unknown sea that has not borne the tidings of "eternal life," as well as those of death; and the same "rude throated engine of war," to use the periphrasis of the writer, that has spoken

the wrath of man, has proclaimed also the meek and forgiving spirit of the Gospel. It is not in Old Testament times only that the sword of Gideon has been united with the arm of the Lord. It is true that millions have breathed their last upon the field of battle, under the burning heat of a noon-day sun, or the chilling dews of midnight, amidst the agonies of thirst, and wounds fast stiffening into death, but have not tens of millions reaped the benefits which have sprung from this theatre of misery and blood? Is not freedom worth all this human sacrifice, frightful as it may be? Has not slavery pangs surpassing those of death? Is not the happiness of millions wrought out in this dreadful workshop, to be put in the balance against the sufferings it may have cost? We deceive ourselves when we look not beyond this field of carnage. There are brighter and sunnier regions beyond it. The field of battle is to this world, what the grave-yard is to the next, the dark and dreary portal to a brighter and happier state.

We have said that there have been few if any wars from which great good, as well as great evil, has not been derived. Let us inquire as to a few of the most prominent. We will begin with the First of the Crusades — a religious war — instigated by Peter the Hermit — its object the recovery of the tomb of the Saviour from the possession of the Saracen.

There are few events in the history of the world to which society owes more than to this war. Ignorant of each other's social condition, and almost of each other's geographical position; cherishing no other feelings towards each other than those of rivalship and jealousy; crossing each other's borders only in marauding parties, or in hostile armies, there was, previously to this time, no common bond of union even among Christian nations. Banded under the crusade against a common foe, they became united among themselves. Under the feudal system, which prevailed at that period, the relation of chief and vassal, was that of master and slave. The spirit of a common cause, however, lightened the bondage of the vassal, and drew him nearer to the heart of his chief. They felt the need of each other's services, and a new interest was awakened between them. The vassal became aware of his own consequence, and the rude and uncultivated mind

of the baron acquired a new taste for that civilization which he found in the dominions of the Greek emperors, and the Saracen soldans. The antipathies of religion itself became softened; its superstitions were diminished; and even the hatred of the Infidel had become less after the termination of the crusade, than it was at the beginning. But its good effects did not end here. From this point radiated a more general spirit of benevolence, and a juster estimate of the dignity of man. It was the commencement of a great popular movement; the first seed from which has sprung the great harvest of political freedom. Who could have anticipated from this horde of eighty thousand fanatics and brutal soldiers, the glorious fruits which have sprung from the harvests they wasted, and the fields they desolated? Yet how easy would it be for some wailing poet, or orator, to sing a dirge, or pronounce a requiem over the ruins of Antioch or Edessa, and demonstrate from their smoking and plundered remains that abject submission is, in all cases, the part of wisdom?

But let us not be misunderstood. We are not advocating war in the abstract. We are only contending that it is not the unmixed evil which the writer has represented it. War should ever be the last, the very last resort of nations. All but right and justice should be surrendered before an appeal is taken to arms. There is no light more false than that on the plume of military glory. The nation that wars merely for glory or conquest, cannot expect the blessings of Heaven to attend her standard. Her final downfall is certain. Drunk with blood, she can only awake from her intoxication in chains.

"So like a giant statue fell imperial Rome."

Rome, weakened by conquests and extent of territory, torn by intestine divisions, and unable to centralize her power, became an easy prey to an enemy whom she might have defied in the days of her comparative infancy; and paid for the freedom of which she had despoiled other nations, by the loss of her own.

To illustrate still further our position we will take, as another instance, the wars of the French Revolution — the wars of Napoleon, as they are called. The writer has made a free use of them to exhibit the deep and utter

misery and distress which attend the progress of war. The seiges of Ciudad Rodrigo, Badajoz and Saragossa are spread before us. It is a bloody picture; one at which the soul of man revolts, and the heart becomes faint; and yet how infinitely does it fall short of the dread original! And how vain is the task of searching for language in which to convey even a faint idea of such accumulated horrors! Whilst reading a description of such scenes, we are forcibly reminded of a tale, in which two celestial beings from some remote part of the universe are represented as passing in their flight across the orbit of the earth. In their course they find themselves over a part of the ocean on which there happens to be a naval engagement. This is *hell,* is it not? said the least informed of these brings to the other. No — said his attendant, — this is the *earth;* in hell the devils treat each other with more humanity.

But even here again, amidst the demoniac scenes of the French Revolution, and the wars that followed it, war is not without its consolations. It would be in vain to deny, however we may be shocked at the crimes of this bloody epoch of history, that even the sufferings of that reign of terror and blasphemy, have been more than balanced by the benefits which subsequent generations have received from them. A comparison of the present state of France with that which preceded the Revolution, will leave no doubt upon the mind of any impartial man that great and important advantages have been derived from them.

Previously to these events, there was no country, which could lay any claim to freedom, in which the distinction between the plebeian and patrician ranks was so marked and disqualifying as in France. Every office of honor, or profit was held by the nobility; a class consisting of about one hundred and fifty thousand out of a population of thirty millions. There was no field for industry, enterprise or talent. The tenantry were borne down by the oppressive remains of the feudal system, and were in a situation but little removed from that of the meanest bondage. They were oppressed by legal services due to those of whom they held their estates; were restricted in their mode of cultivating and improving them; were bound to perform without pay or compensation a certain amount of yearly labor for their superiors, and were subjected to a system of ruinous

game laws, which prohibited even the fencing of their fields. They were compelled by law to grind their corn at the mills, press their grapes at the wine-presses, and even to bake their bread in the ovens of their landlords! The middle classes were deprived of all political power, and, like the peasantry of the country and the laboring classes of the city, were anxious for a revolution. We might go on with this enumeration of political and domestic abominations "till the crack of doom" if it was necessary.

It is not requisite to enumerate all the beneficial changes which have grown out of the Revolution. It is sufficient to have stated some of the abuses which existed previously to that event, to show that scarcely any revolution could fail to do good. But we might name thousands of blessings which have flowed from this source, polluted as it was. The reign of Napoleon abounds in them. The code Napoleon, the Alpine roads, the harbor at Antwerp, a more equal division of landed property, the diminution of taxes, the establishment of equal rights, the sale of church lands, an improved system of finance and an open and fair field to industry and talent, are among the few which most readily suggest themselves in the course of a hurried and brief enumeration. No one then, we think, can hesitate to admit that the French Revolution and its wars advanced the cause of religion, freedom and humanity, not only in France, but throughout the world.

"In our last war with Great Britain," says the writer, "the United States appealed to arms in vain."

He contends that this country not only gained nothing by the war of 1812, but that the cause of it was altogether inadequate. "The greatest number of American seamen," he says, "ever officially alleged to be compulsorily serving in the British navy was about eight hundred." He thinks this a small matter to go to war about. Only eight hundred of American citizens were held in the worst of slavery by the British! It is true they were entitled to the protection of the laws of their country. They had supported the government of that country in peace, by contributing to its expenses from their hard earnings, and they were bound to lay down their lives in its defence in case of a war. It is true, also, that they were taken by force from American vessels; from beneath the very folds

of the flag of their country, and under a claim of right too, by the British government. But this was nothing so long as there were only eight hundred of them! Great Britain was then at war with nearly all the civilized world. Her fleets covered every sea. She wanted men, and her boast was that she would have them. How long would it have been before the eight hundred would have swelled into as many thousands, had we tamely submitted to her threats? "We appealed to arms in vain!" Does any reflecting man doubt that the result of the war of 1812 has already saved us from one war, at least, with the same power, growing out of the disputed boundary line between this country and Canada? And that it may save us from another, in relation to the Oregon question? The war of 1812 established the fact in the eyes of all Europe, that we could and would fight if necessity required it. And that fact has guarantied our peace for years past, and probably will do so for years to come.

"Man spurns the worm, but pauses ere he wake
The sleeping venom of the folded snake."

The opinion of the European world was, that we loved our money better than our national honor; that if we could creep along, like so many Jew brokers, putting money in our purses, "though all the world should void its rheum upon our beards," we should be contented. We were the only Republic. Our valor was untried; and man was supposed to have degenerated on this side of the Atlantic. What was left for us but to fight, or submit to the last humiliation of man? If we yielded to one outrage how long would it have been before we should have been called upon to yield to another? Pretences are not wanting when the object is to fix a quarrel upon a rival. National encroachments are like diseases, they must be checked early; they go harder when they become seated.

The war of 1812 was an unpopular war. It was opposed as unnecessary and inhuman, by many of the best and wisest men in our country. But we believe there are few among those who opposed it, who will, at this day, agree with the writer that the country gained nothing by it. One of its good effects, at least, has been to create more nationality of feeling, and produce a more common bond of

union. Should we be called upon to engage in another foreign war, we think the government would be better supported, and the people more easily reconciled to their temporary privations. But, what is more important, we feel convinced that, notwithstanding the high grounds on which the last war left the country, there is less disposition to go to war than there would have been, had we not acquired the rank among nations which the last war has assigned us. We can now pass over many indignities which, under other circumstances, we should have felt bound to resent. We have no farther fame to earn on the field of battle. We can hope for no better success than has already attended our arms. We have nothing to gain by a second contest, and much to lose. We are a proud people, and shall be chary of our credit in the field. The nation whose courage is undoubted can afford to be magnanimous. We cannot hope to terminate every war with a battle like that of New Orleans. Fortune is fickle. Chance presides over the battle-field as well as the gaming-table; and the favorite of to-day may be the victim of to-morrow. Brother Jonathan is satisfied with a reasonable profit; and when he has cut the tree down close to the ground, he has too much sense to dig for the roots. Our flag now floats respected in every sea. Our ships of war swing proudly at their moorings, in every harbor. Our merchantmen pursue their way across the ocean undisturbed. Our seamen no longer tremble at the sight of the boat of an English man of war, nor fear being mustered upon the deck of their own vessel by some beardless midshipman, to be turned over to the tender mercies of a press-gang, that they may waste their blood in a foreign service, or shed that of others with whom they have no cause of quarrel. Has our country, then, gained nothing by the war of 1812?

The writer proposes to substitute arbitration, in all cases, for war. "Arbitration, Mediation, and a Congress of Nations" he says, "are all of them practicable and calculated to secure peaceful justice. Let it not be said, then, that war is a *necessity*."

No one can question the superior wisdom, as well as humanity of adopting either of these remedies in preference to war. But if war is not the *alternative* in case of a

refusal to submit to arbitration does he think the stronger party would consent to it? It is to avoid war that nations submit to arbitration. Let it be once understood that the cannon is not to be the arbitrator in case all other arbitration fails, and what would be the result? The very supposition that nations can be guilty of injustice proves that arbitration would be rejected if there was no penalty attached to such rejection. It is only upon the principle that nations can do no intentional wrong, that his argument can be sustained. We need not go out of his Oration to prove that such a position is unsound and fallacious. He has given us too many instances of their gross injustice to render such a ground tenable. The nation that would prefer an unjust claim would enforce that claim. The doctrine that she would submit such a claim to arbitration, unless forced to do so by the fear of worse consequences, is idle. When the lion and the ass, in the fable, were dividing the spoil after the chase, and the ass complained that the lion took more than his share, his majesty did not offer to submit the question to arbitration, and the ass was not ass enough to propose it.

This is an age of strange doctrines, certainly, but among them all no one can be more strange than that of *non-resistance*. That any man should soberly advocate it in its full extent, as is done in this Oration, and gravely recommend to a nation abounding in wealth, surrounded by commercial and manufacturing rivals, and offering every temptation to the spoiler, to dismantle her fortifications, disband her armies, and break up her ships of war, is truly astonishing. And this the writer does with the partition of Poland, the subjugation of India, the invasion of Russia and the war with China before his eyes! And that, too, after having pronounced a Jeremiad over the ambition, cruelty and rapacity of nations!

Suppose he could persuade a majority of the people to adopt his sentiments, what would be the next step in this new system of policy? Are we to go on increasing our wealth, and at the same time increasing the temptation of other nations to plunder us, or are we to seek security in poverty? In the remote and poorer agricultural districts, where the bare necessaries of life are to be found, the inhabitants go to bed at night leaving their doors unfast-

ened, and relying for their security upon something stronger than bolts or bars — their poverty. Does he mean to push his principle to this extent, and advise that we should become a nation of paupers? There are certainly expressions in his Oration which look very much like it. "Strong nations," he says, "have always been at war whilst weak ones have enjoyed peace." Whatever he may mean his reasoning leads inevitably to this conclusion. What is to become in such a case of our seats of learning which he proposes to endow with the money now expended in military preparations? and where is that money to come from with which they are to be endowed?

That the causes of war are often trivial, and that war does not pay back in money the expenses that attend it, is most true. Should Great Britain make out a trial-balance of her war account, she would certainly find the balance most wofully against her. But nations have something to look to, besides their cash account. The war of our Revolution cost us more money than we have ever received from it; but we trust the writer would not be willing to sell the blessings we derived from it for the money it cost. Should we be called upon to defend our claim to Oregon, it might require more cash than it would ever produce us; but are we to clap our hands on our pockets and say with the writer, "Let England take it?" Perhaps in such an event she might prefer Massachusetts or New York; shall she take them also? She is not modest in accepting presents; the smallest favors are thankfully acknowledged. Like the porcupine in the fable, she has a wonderful knack at making herself at home in the comfortable quarters of another.

It was said of Rome, by Jugurtha, in the days of her corruption, that she was for sale, and only wanted a purchaser. Should the sentiments of this writer prevail, it might be said of this country, that it was ready to give itself away, and only wanted some one to accept it.

The reasons assigned by the writer for destroying our fortifications etc. are certainly of a most original character. "They serve only," he says, "to invite attack." "Every new fortification and every additional gun in our harbor is, therefore, not a safeguard, but a source of danger to our city." "Better throw them into the sea." "It is a rule

of war," he adds, "that non-combatants shall not be in any way molested, and that the property of private persons shall be respected."

But where does he get his authority for saying that private property would be respected in such an event? The instances he cites in his Oration are not in point. The object of the allied armies when they entered France, after the battle of Waterloo, was simply to dethrone Napoleon. It was no part of their policy to subjugate France. It was for the interest of the allies that she should retain her independence. The case he names is an exempt one altogether. Let us look a little further into this principle. Have nations respected the private property of each other? How does history sustain this position? We will not go beyond the memory of man for our illustrations. Let the writer search the records of the Governor Generalship of Warren Hastings, in India. Let him summon up the shade of the Nabob of Arcot. Let him ask the Amirs of Sinde. Let him visit the plains of the Punjab. He will hear a voice crying to him from the ground, like that which froze the blood of Macbeth when he entered the chamber of Duncan, — "*sleep no more!*" England "*does murder sleep!*"

What has been the conduct of France in the Pacific Ocean? Under the sacred garb of religion, she has stolen into the lonely and sequestered isle of Tahiti; driven its lawful Queen, Pomare, from her legitimate throne into exile; and raised the standard of France upon the soil of a harmless and unoffending people whose only crime was an inability to defend themselves. Look again to her conduct in Algiers. Even the Arab is invaded in his desert of sand, and the lion driven from his hereditary lair. Whilst England and France are compassing the whole earth, seizing upon every waste sand-hill and green island, and annexing them to their dominions, we are advised to dismantle our fortifications, throw their guns into the sea, and rely for our protection upon that regard to private property and personal security which arises from *non-resistance!* Yes — we *should* find protection:

> "Such protection as vultures give to lambs,
> Covering and devouring them."

We feel that there is more safety in the Spartan answer, when summoned to lay down their arms, — "*Come and take them.*"

The writer in his letter to the Mayor of the City, which is prefixed to his Oration, says, that he "disclaims the suggestion which has been volunteered with regard to his opinions that force may not be employed, under the sanction of Justice, in the conservation of the laws, and of domestic quiet."

This disclaimer can avail him nothing. It irresistibly follows from his premises that the laws of the country, its police, and all other coercive measures ought to be abandoned. His disclaimer proves that he shrinks from his own conclusions, but it proves nothing more. If he admits that force is to be applied for the purpose of suppressing *internal* violence, why not *external?* If riots and domestic insurrection are to be quelled by the strong arm of power, why are not foreign foes to be repelled by the same means? If we are to have jails and prisons to confine a few comparatively harmless disturbers of the peace, why not fortifications and ships of war to repel the hordes of foreign aggressors who might see fit to ravage our shores? Of what use, we may well ask, would it be to imprison the former, if the latter are to be allowed to assail us unresisted? To recommend the destruction of our fortifications, and the casting of their guns into the sea, and at the same time to advocate the erection of State Prisons to confine a few robbers at home, seems to be truly "straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel." We are to have no ships of war to protect our seamen and merchandise on the ocean, but we are to have a fleet on the coast of Africa to suppress the slave trade. We are to do nothing to protect ourselves, but everything to protect the negro. We can have no better proof of the unsoundness of the writer's argument, than the absurdities to which he is driven to avoid its conclusions.

But what becomes, in the meantime, of that principle of *sympathy* between man and man, upon which he places so much reliance, as a substitute for force? If our foreign enemies are to be disarmed by kindness, if it is true with regard to them, that "generosity begets generosity," "love wins love," and "peace secures peace," is it not more

emphatically true with respect to our own citizens? Is our charity neither to begin nor end at home? Are our prisons to be reserved for our own citizens, and our arms and our hearts for strangers? One would think that this powerful principle would operate, at least, as well at home as abroad. If he had advised to tear down our jails; to dismiss our constables; to abolish our Courts of Justice; to repeal all coercive laws, and to rely upon our schools and churches, and, at the same time, to *keep up* our fortifications in order that we might apply force to those over whom we could exercise no moral influence, there might have been some consistency in his doctrine, absurd as it would be; but when he reverses the principle, "the dog star must rage" indeed.

It is remarkable how all these leaders in moral reform "halt upon the same leg." Whilst our churches are languishing at home from the want of needful support, thousands of dollars are lavished upon foreign missions. Every effort is made to convert heathens into Christians, but none to prevent Christians from becoming heathens. Whilst our white population are suffering under the bondage of sin from the want of moral and religious instruction, the slave of the south is calling forth the gush of sympathy from the bosoms of thousands. Has all this popular cry its foundation in vanity, in the love of notoriety, in the desire to belong to some new sect? We should be sorry to think so, but there seems to be no other rational way of accounting for it.

It must not be supposed because we have called in question so many of the writer's positions, that we do not admire the pure spirit of morality that pervades his pages. It is not that we do not wish to live in a world into which sin cannot enter, that we deny the soundness of his positions; but that we consider him as giving a false view of the world as it is. We believe that injury is always done by misrepresentation, whether it be by attributing too much good, or too much evil to its object. It is necessary that the young, at least, on their entrance into the world, should begin their career with just notions of its character. That they should neither believe it to be an Utopia nor a Pandemonium. That they should view it as it is, — as a mixed state of good and evil; neither a primrose path, nor

a way of thorns and briars; lest the faint heart should be discouraged by difficulties, or the bold one rendered too confident by hope. It is in a just appreciation of life only, that safety can exist. The misrepresentation, then, of any great principle is deeply to be lamented. Knowledge is safety, as well as power.

Let us suppose a child educated strictly in the principles contained in this Oration. Let us suppose him at the age of twenty-one years introduced into active life, and practising literally the precepts in which he had been educated, what would be his fate in a few years? Why, that of a china vase, when brought in collision with iron ware. He could not go the length of a street without finding out that he had been educated for a different world from that in which he was destined to live. His pockets would be picked at noon-day; and the chimney-sweep of twelve years old would thrust him from the side-walk. If he reproached his instructer for the defects in his education, would it be a satisfactory answer for him, to reply that he had trained him for the world as it should be, and not as it is?

But it is said that the principles insisted upon in this Oration are those of Christianity, and must, therefore, of course, be adapted to the state of man, or they would not have been taught by our Saviour. This we take the liberty to deny, and we rest our denial on the Scriptures themselves. The principle of *non-resistance*, as inculcated in this discourse, is not sustained by any fair or common-sense interpretation of the Gospel. We admit expressions may be found which, if taken literally, go to this extent. But it is plain that they were never intended to be so taken. Did not Christ clear the temple by force, casting out the money changers? When the "*soldiers*" inquired of him "what they should do," did he not enjoin upon them to "be content with their wages?" Did he not direct his hearers to render unto Cæsar the things that were Cæsar's? And is not the acknowledgment of a ruler, and of the supremacy of the laws, an acknowledgment of the fitness and necessity of coercive measures? We admit that if we were all Christians, wars would cease, and injustice be banished from the earth. But inasmuch as we are not so, are we not to be governed by the present state of things? Is

not the change to be gradual? Are we to reach perfection by a single leap? Heaven works out its decrees in its own good time, and by degrees, and by processes unheeded and unknown to man. We cannot advance the index upon the dial-plate however vain we may be of our powers.

We have not been induced to make these remarks from any particular fear that the sentiments contained in this Oration will ever become permanently popular; or that the work in which they are embodied can be of an enduring character. It will have its brief hour upon the stage, and then pass off to be succeeded by some other equally unsubstantial and visionary. It has a severer ordeal than ours to pass through—that of time—which tries everything in its crucible, and allows no false doctrine to escape its rigid analysis. To this ordeal we might safely leave the decision. But time is often a slow workman, though he is always a sure one. And it not unfrequently happens that false opinions, like false money, obtain a wide circulation before their spuriousness is detected.

There is something very alluring in these doctrines of *perfectibility;* and every good mind must wish them to be true. The great danger is that we may be led to believe them for that reason; that "our wishes may become the father of our thoughts," and that allured by a goodly outside we may not detect the falsehood within. Who is not delighted to gaze upon the ocean in its still and quiet majesty? But who would wish to be ignorant of the fact that death lurks beneath its smiles, and that the wave which breaks so gently at his feet to-day may be tossed into a tempest tomorrow?

Our principal reason, however, for entering our protest against the doctrines contained in this Oration is, that we are unwilling they should go forth as the sentiments of our city. Had it been delivered before a Peace Society, we should never have raised our small and weak voice against it. It would then have gone abroad with the true stamp of sectarianism upon it; and would have been understood by all to have been an emanation from that particular class of moral reformers. The citizens of Boston would have been in no degree responsible for its principles. But it is now ushered forth as a discourse delivered at a public celebra-

tion by the citizens of Boston, of our national birth-day. Those who are not aware of the circumstances of the case, have a right to suppose that the Municipal Authorities selected the Orator with a previous knowledge of his sentiments; and that in so doing, they had reference to the public opinion of the city. It is to correct this impression, as much as anything, that we have made the preceding observations. We are unwilling that the impression should go abroad that the city of Boston, on whose soil stands Old Faneuil Hall, has degenerated; that the spirit of freedom and independence which warmed the hearts, and nerved the arms of her citizens during the war of the Revolution, has become extinct in their descendants; that the children are unworthy of the blessings for which their fathers bled, and are prepared to heap dishonor on their graves. We are unwilling it should be thought that a generation of cowards has sprung up beneath the very shadow of that lofty pile which crowns the summit of the hill, on which the first standard was unfurled in the cause of freedom. We have many of us no inheritance to bestow but that of political freedom; and we are unwilling that this inheritance should be tarnished. We know that Boston *is* where she ever has been — in the front rank of patriotism. That though she values peace, she would never accept it coupled with dishonor.

It is not just, then, that she should be held responsible for sentiments that she would be the first to disavow; and that she should seem to sanction by her silence, a doctrine that she would blush to defend.

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